

Wouldst thou both eat thy cake, and have
it?

The whole of *The Church-Porch* consists
simply of such
gnomic verses, more wittily strung together;
and to this
day every schoolboy of St. John's,
Hurstpierpoint, is
compelled by the statutes to get by heart this
compendium

of the sort of wisdom Polonius most loved:

Yet in thy thriving still misdoubt some evil;
Lest gaining gain on thee, and make thee
dimme
To all things els. Wealth is the conjurers
devil;
Whom when he thinks he hath, the devil
hath him.
Gold thou mayst safely touch; but if it stick
Unto thy hands, it woundeth to the quick.

Herbert allows the tables of the money-
changers to
remain in this 'Porch' of his *Temple*; but
they must be
honest brokers, kept straight by the wittiest
of sermons.
His wit, indeed, ill-controlled by an
uncertain taste, is
liable to break out appallingly in charades
on 'Jesu', ana-
grams on 'Mary', and descriptions of bones
jogging one
another at the Last Day. But in the
background he re-
tained an artistic conscience, as well as a
religious one:

When first my lines of heav'nly joyes made
mention,
Such was their lustre, they did so excell,
That I sought out quaint words, and trim
invention;
My thoughts began to burnish, sprout, and
swell,
Curling with metaphors a plain intention,
Decking the sense as if it were to sell, . . .
As flames do work and winde, when they
ascend;
So did I weave myself into the sense.
But while I bustled, I might heare a friend
Whisper, *How wide is all this long pretence!*
There is in love a sweetnesse readie pennd:
Copie out onely that, and save expense.

He was right. Not cleverness, but the

simple sincerity
of his hope and his sorrow, has preserved
his memory.
He sees the day break; but already the dew
weeps for the
coming evenfall. He gathers his roses: